

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully acknowledge receipt of the Final Office Action mailed March 24, 2005.

In the Office Action, the Examiner: (1) rejected claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; (2) rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Yamanashi et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,390,849); (3) rejected claims 1 and 5-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Hatagishi et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,700,162); (4) objected to claims 2, 3, and 10 as being dependant upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form; and (5) allowed claim 12.

By this amendment, Applicants propose to: (1) amend claims 1, 3, and 11; (2) add new claim 13; and (3) cancel claim 2 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 4 was previously canceled in the "Response to Office Action" filed December 28, 2004. Claims 1, 3, and 5-13 are currently pending. Of these claims, claims 1, 11, and 12 are independent.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments of claims 1, 3, and 11. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of claim 12.

Applicants also acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2, 3, and 10. Consequently, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the feature of allowable claim 2, and have cancelled now superfluous claim 2. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 3, 5-10, and 13 are in condition for allowance at least due to their dependence from independent claim 1.

I. 35 U.S.C. §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH REJECTION OF CLAIM 11

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner asserts “it is unclear how many locking arms the connector has.” (*Office Action*, p. 2, line 8).

Applicants have amended claim 11 to recite in part “a plurality of projecting flexible locking arms including locking parts configured to lock with the engagement parts of the terminals, wherein each flexible locking arm is positioned to correspond with one of the chambers.” Consequently, claim 11 discloses a second embodiment of the invention wherein a connector comprises a plurality of terminals, chambers and flexible locking arms, wherein each flexible locking arm 17A is provided to correspond with one chamber (emphases added). (*Specification*, p. 3, line 21 – p. 4, line 13 and p. 6, line 25). Accordingly, the claim rejection set forth under 35 U.S.C. §112 is now moot and should be withdrawn. Independent claim 11 is now in condition for allowance.

II. 35 U.S.C. §102(b) REJECTION OF CLAIM 1

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Yamanashi et al.* In addition, claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Hatagishi et al.* Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

As noted above, in response to the Examiner’s indication of allowable subject matter in claim 2, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the feature of allowable claim 2, which the Examiner admits is not discussed by *Yamanashi* or *Hatagishi*. Consequently, independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be withdrawn.

Moreover, claims 3, 5-10, and 13 are in condition for allowance at least due to their dependence from independent claim 1.

III. CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1, 3, and 5-13 in condition for allowance.

Applicants submit that the proposed amendments of claims 1, 3, and 11 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the final action by the Examiner presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicants' invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the Amendment would allow the Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants submit that the entry of the amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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